

Activity 1: Abstraction

Across time, storytellers have conveyed warnings. A writer might use characters, settings, events, and even objects to convey a message about human behavior—or the behavior of society as a whole. For example, Ray Bradbury uses the arrogant character Eckels to warn against becoming too confident about our ability to dominate the forces of nature.

Choose a present-day problem and jot down the flawed attitudes or behavior that seem to be behind it. Then devise a plot outline of your own as a cautionary tale; it need not be science fiction. Focus on what would be effective ways to get across your message. Use these questions to guide your outline:

- What are your basic ideas about the characters, setting, and events?
- What human flaws would you portray? Stubbornness? Recklessness? Would a single or multiple characters represent these flaws?
- Throughout the tale, what clues about your message will you provide? What reactions would you want to trigger by the tale's end?

Activity 2: Investigation

In Ray Bradbury's short story, time travel enables Eckels and the others to visit the era of the dinosaurs. Would it surprise you to learn that you might be able to do the same, perhaps as easily as stepping outside and glancing skyward? Some paleontologists—people who study past eras by looking at the fossil records—now believe that some species of modern-day birds may be directly descended from the dinosaurs!

Use the Internet take a trip to the library to investigate dinosaur descendants. Prepare a report that summarizes the latest science and answers some of the following questions:

- Did flying birds coexist with land-based dinosaurs?
- What does the fossil record of certain theropods, such as Velociraptor, show that connects them to birds?
- What have some paleontologists concluded about the original purpose of feathers?

Activity 3: Invention

Travis insists that no one step off the metal path under any circumstance. He explains in great detail the terrible consequences that might follow. Yet, as Eckels shows, it is absurdly easy to wander off the path at any time. It's clear that Time Safari, Inc., could use your ingenuity and imagination to solve this problem.

Redesign the metal path so that hunters have no choice but to stay on it.

- Explain why the existing metal path is ineffective.
- Identify design changes that would guarantee no one can leave the path for any reason. Remember, the year is 2055, so feel free to imagine technologies and solutions that do not exist today.
- Draw a picture of your redesigned path, highlighting its new features.